

### Church Layout prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Rebuild

The 12<sup>th</sup> century church was probably small, consisting of a nave and chancel, to which a south aisle was added in about the 13<sup>th</sup> century and temporarily a north aisle in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The building was largely rebuilt in about the 15<sup>th</sup> century and subsequently demolished and rebuilt in 1852-3.

- The 15<sup>th</sup> century tower (is still here!)
- A wooden gallery projecting into the nave housed the choir and musicians (fiddles, bass-voils, clarinets and flutes). The gallery was removed. A flute said to have played in the gallery is locked in the Vestry
- The current font is from the old church and was recut and placed nearer the porch
- The nave was narrower and full of pews.. Six old gravestones were placed on the nave floor
- A wooden screen (subsequently removed) with a double- or triple-decker pulpit
- The chancel - lay askew to the right and probably level with the nave. This was subsequently straightened and raised three steps.
- The commandment boards previously in the chancel were moved into the tower during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- The south transept was rebuilt virtually as before, the tomb under the original 14<sup>th</sup> century ogee arch, probably that of Speke, was destroyed in the rebuilding
- The north transept, build in 1840 to match the south was designed by a local builder/architect and said to be ugly, lasted only 12 years and was replaced with a new, longer aisle running the whole length of the nave.
- The doorway / porch with a large Tudor or Stuart window on the side was shifted to the west to bring you in at the back of the nave.
- In 1849 a wealthy lady, Mary Tucker of Brampford House, died leaving £1,000 to improve the church and named a new architect, Louis Butcher of Barnstaple, to oversee the rebuilding of the church that took place in 1852-3 (the overall cost was ultimately £1,700).
- Revd Gorham gave his own money to beautify the church (incl. the east window, pulpit, stained glass windows)



Brampford Speke (perhaps means 'bramble ford') is a small village in Devon 4 miles to the north of Exeter and 8 miles from Crediton on the banks of the River Exe.

From the time of King Henry II (1154-1189) and perhaps earlier, the manor of Brampford Speke belonged to the family of Especk from which the family name Speke later derived.

The Speke family were lords of the manor until 1752, when the title passed by marriage to the Taylors of Denbury.

Brampford Speke was served by the Exe Valley line of the Great Western Railway, which opened in 1885, became an unmanned halt in 1923 and eventually closed in 1963 (under the 'Beeching Axe'). Both the old railway station and station house remain in residential use, across the river.

Today the village has a small population of around 300 living in 150 houses. It has a CoE Primary School built as a national school in 1867 (c80 pupils) and a pre-school (c20 pupils). There is a baptist chapel built near the school in 1894, a mobile library (once a month), a WI and an active Twinning Association (twinned with Commes, Normandy). There is much taking place within the village.

The village pub, the Agricultural Inn, a hostelry and free house dating back at least to 1840, and located across the road from the church.



### Church Services

Family Service – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in every month  
 Holy Communion – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in every month  
 Festival Services – incl. Christmas, Easter, Remembrance Day, etc.

### Netherexe Parishes

Netherexe Parishes is a community of nine churches in the Diocese of Exeter serving Brampford Speke, Cadbury, Newton St Cyres, Rewe with Netherexe, Stoke Canon with Huxham, Thorverton and Upton Pyne. The churches of the Netherexe parishes together form a 'Mission Community', which commits itself to maintaining a worshipping, witnessing community within all our parishes and making the gospel known to people of all ages and backgrounds.

The Netherexe Parishes  
 Website: [www.netherexe.org](http://www.netherexe.org)

Produced by  
 Brian Please



## Visitors Guide



### The Parish Church of St Peter Brampford Speke

WELCOME to Brampford Speke Church. We are delighted that you have taken the time to find and visit our church.

There has been a church at Brampford Speke for over 900 years, first recorded in the early 12<sup>th</sup> Century when Walter de Treminet gave it to monks of St Nicholas Priory, Exeter. The church is Grade I listed.

St Peter's visual appeal is characterised by its relatively modest scale, appropriate to its location in a small Devon village, complemented by the sense of peace and seclusion in the picturesque setting by the River Exe.

The tower with its slender proportions, is an important feature of the landscape, being visible from the west, the road into the village and from across the River Exe. The bells are the second lightest set of bells in Devon.

The village has association with a number of eminent individuals; May Anne Evans, wife of Benjamin Disraeli, lived here during her childhood in 1790s, the novelist George Gissing visited here in 1891-2 calling this 'the most beautiful village I ever saw', and the historian W.G. Hoskins (author of *Devon*, 1954) enjoyed walks here and at his request had his ashes scattered in a field near the river.

We hope you enjoy your visit and wish you a safe journey home.

Finally we ask that you join with the countless people who have passed through our doors by pausing to say a prayer before you leave.



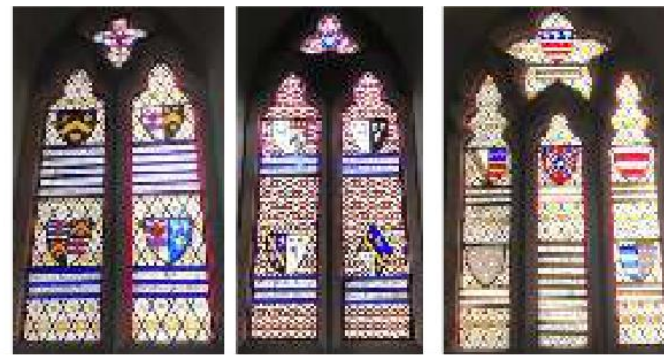
Reflections from a South Aisle window

*God of heaven and earth  
 we thank you for your grace and mercy  
 that has shone through the lives of the saints in  
 Brampford Speke in many years past.  
 We pray that this church may always bear witness to your redeeming  
 love, that all who enter these doors may be filled with your presence  
 and may come to know and love you, through Jesus Christ. Amen*





The Nave – looking East



Lords of the Manor – Revd Gorham did the research and helped pay for the stained glass windows showing the coats of arms of the lords of the manors of Bramford and Cowley

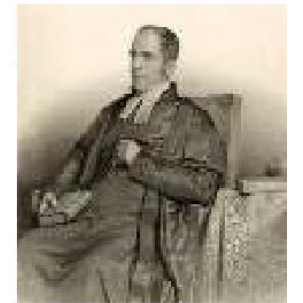


The Pulpit - large, assertive wooden pulpit



Revd George Cornelius Gorham, instituted as Vicar of Bramford Speke in 1851 where he spent the rest of his life until 1857. As Vicar, he restored the church building entirely during 1852-53, except the tower. He was an antiquary and botanist of some reputation, as well as the author of a number of pamphlets.

Revd Gorham, was recommended as vicar in 1847 but only instituted when the Privy Council overturned the Bishop of Exeter's decision in 1851. Gorham's contention was that by baptism, infants do not become members of Christ and the children of God. His legal action caused great controversy at the time. The 'Gorham Judgment' forced many prominent Anglicans to join the Roman Catholic Church.

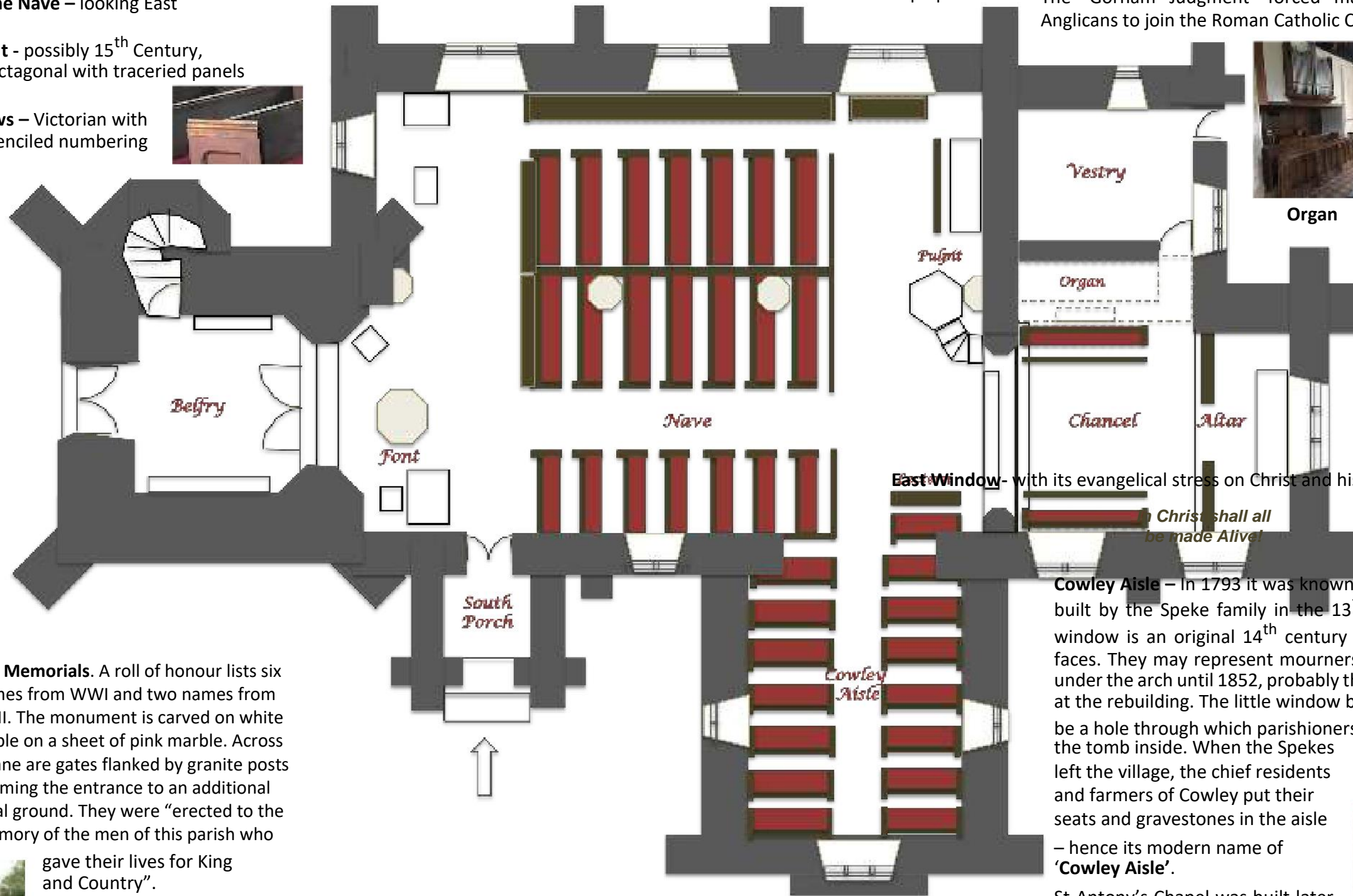


The Font - possibly 15<sup>th</sup> Century, recut, octagonal with traceried panels

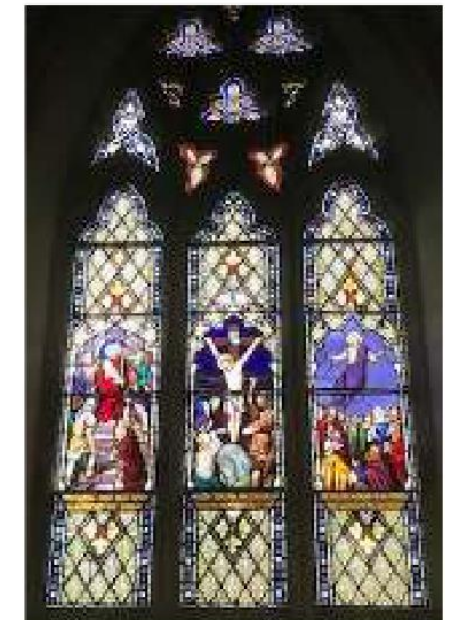
Pews – Victorian with stenciled numbering



The Corbels - supporting the roof braces with their heads and leaf carvings (oak, vine, rose and thistle).



Organ



East Window- with its evangelical stress on Christ and his passion

Christ shall all be made Alive!

Cowley Aisle – In 1793 it was known as 'Speke's Aisle', and was probably built by the Speke family in the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century. Under the south window is an original 14<sup>th</sup> century ogee arch with four carved hooded faces. They may represent mourners, since there was a plain altar tomb under the arch until 1852, probably that of Speke; sadly this was destroyed at the rebuilding. The little window beneath the ogee used to be a hole through which parishioners placed tithe milk and eggs upon the tomb inside. When the Spekes left the village, the chief residents and farmers of Cowley put their seats and gravestones in the aisle – hence its modern name of 'Cowley Aisle'.

St Antony's Chapel was built later in 1868 giving Cowley resident their own place of worship.



War Memorials. A roll of honour lists six names from WWI and two names from WWII. The monument is carved on white marble on a sheet of pink marble. Across the lane are gates flanked by granite posts forming the entrance to an additional burial ground. They were "erected to the memory of the men of this parish who gave their lives for King and Country".



Their Names Liveth for Evermore

Acknowledgment is made that information in this Guide was drawn from 'A Guide to St Peter's Church, Bramford Speke' by Nicholas Orme (1989, 1992)

Ogee Arch and Window

